

DATE 2.21.07 HB 9

Representative Kasten, members of the committee, for the record, my name is Claudia Montagne, Executive Director of the Montana Artists Refuge in Basin. I am testifying on behalf of Grant # 1268, for operational support for the Refuge. Although funded last biennium, we just missed the funding cutoff this year, due to the increase in applicants and the decrease in monies available. I urge you, not just for us, for all the arts in Montana, to find a way to increase the Trust so that funding levels can at least reflect and keep up with inflation.

I wish to make just a few points. We are not a performing or presenting arts organization; we support art at its source – the artist, whether a poet, writer, painter, filmmaker, composer or musician.

- Cultural progress depends upon new ways of thinking about and reflecting on the world. The creation of new work and ideas arts, literature, music, science is essential to our civilization; and
- Art comes from artists!
- By providing space and time to create, artists residency programs such as the Refuge, the Bray and the Butte Silver Bow Arts Foundation nurture the next generation of creativity

It sounds simple, but in truth, tomorrow's masterpieces depend upon support for today's artists. You can be a valuable part of this equation - bringing new art and performance into our midst - by supporting The Montana Artists Refuge, one of only three artist residency programs in the state. Our mission is to support the creation of new art by providing time and space for artists to pursue their creative process and to expand diversity in the arts in southwestern Montana through outreach and presentations.

The Refuge has brought economic and cultural vitality to the southern half of Jefferson County — Boulder, Basin, Whitehall and Cardwell. Artists conduct workshops in the schools, community members, adults and children, are invited to open studios to view first hand the creative process, and our signature residency, the American Indian Artists Program in September brings only Native Artists to the Refuge for the month, ending with a four day Symposium to which we bring together 30 Montana Indian Artists for slide shows of their work, open studios, gallery shows, and discussions of what may define Indian art, and the ability for Indian artists work to be promoted, exhibited, sold, or collected. Because of distance, this is the first time many of the participants had met or had an opportunity to talk with each other about relevant arts related issues specific to Indians.

A little goes a long way; a grant of \$5,000 would fund residencies for four artists for one month. Your support can help us continue nurturing artists, enriching communities, and enhancing the economic vitality of southwestern Montana. Thank you for your consideration.

P. O. Box 8
Basin, MT 59631
406-225-3500 (tel/fax)
mar@mt.net
www. montanarefuge.org

# Montana State Legislature

# Exhibit number 31

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#### Nurturing Artists, Enriching Communities

The Montana Artists Refuge, located in Basin, Montana, is organized to further the creative work of artists, to create residencies for artists, and to provide arts programs and arts education for both artists and community members.

montana artists refuge

Winter 2007

## An exciting year of jazz and art at the Refuge

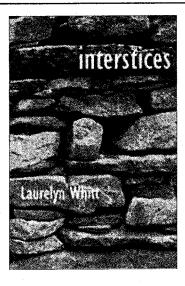


Exquisite traditional beadwork by Birdie Real Bird (Gary Owen).

### American Indian Artists Residency & Symposium

During September, four diverse American Indian artists created a unique community, and as a group, eagerly brought their art, paintings and writings to many venues in Basin, Boulder, East Helena and Helena. A deep understanding of the Indian experience in both urban and rural settings ran through their work, which varied in texture, style and expression.

Continued on page 8



### Writers Residency: Three writers spend October at Refuge

#### LAURELYN WHITT Poet, Spanish Fork, UT

Laurelyn Whitt began her recent reading at the Helena Festival of the Book by greeting the audience and then saying, "Thank you all for caring about poetry." She obviously cares deeply about poetry, observing that much of her poetry "explores various types of interstitial spaces."

"My work," she says, "addresses what is at stake—personally, politically, and culturally—in the drawing and crossing of boundaries, processes that are riddled with subtleties, ambiguities, and hesitancies."

Whitt is an academician—current-ly a professor at Utah Valley State

Continued on page 5



Frances Stewart belting out the blues.

#### The 14th Annual Jazz Brunch & Basin City Jazz Art Experience

On June 11, Basin came alive with the art and music of new friends and old—honored co-founders and past residents such as Nan Parsons and Michael Haykin, who displayed their work; local artists and musicians such as Doug Turman and Jerry Rankin, who engaged in spontaneous creative explorations with unexpected consequences; and musicians such as the Kelly Roberti Quintet and, Frances Stewart and The Rhythm Rockers, whose sets stretched the meaning of jazz.

We enjoyed listening and dancing to spirit-lifting rhythm and blues,

Continued on page 3